



THE
GREAT
COURSES®

Topic
Religion
& Theology

Subtopic
Comparative
& World Religion

Great World Religions: Christianity

Course Guidebook

Professor Luke Timothy Johnson
Emory University



PUBLISHED BY:

THE GREAT COURSES

Corporate Headquarters

4840 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 500

Chantilly, Virginia 20151-2299

Phone: 1-800-832-2412

Fax: 703-378-3819

www.thegreatcourses.com

Copyright © The Teaching Company, 2003

Printed in the United States of America

This book is in copyright. All rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above,
no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted,
in any form, or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise),
without the prior written permission of
The Teaching Company.



Luke Timothy Johnson, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament
and Christian Origins
Emory University

Professor Luke Timothy Johnson is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Born in 1943 and from the ages of 19 to 28 a Benedictine monk, Dr. Johnson received a B.A. in Philosophy from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, an M.Div. in Theology from Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana, and an M.A. in Religious Studies from Indiana University, before earning his Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University in 1976.

Professor Johnson taught at Yale Divinity School from 1976 to 1982 and at Indiana University from 1982 to 1992 before accepting his current position at Emory. He is the author of 20 books, including *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (2nd edition, 1998), which is used widely as a textbook in seminaries and colleges. He has also published several hundred articles and reviews. His most recent books are *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* and *The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship*. He is working on the influence of Greco-Roman religion on Christianity.

Professor Johnson has taught undergraduates, as well as master's level and doctoral students. At Indiana University, he received the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching, was elected a member of the Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching, and won the Brown Derby and Student Choice Awards for teaching. At Emory, he has twice received the "On Eagle's Wings Excellence in Teaching" Award. In 1997–1998, he was a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar, speaking at college campuses across the country.

Professor Johnson is married to Joy Randazzo. They share seven children, 11 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Johnson also teaches the courses called *The Apostle Paul* and *Early Christianity: The Experience of the Divine* for The Teaching Company. ■

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Professor Biography	i
Course Scope	1

LECTURE GUIDES

LECTURE 1

Christianity among World Religions.....	4
---	---

LECTURE 2

Birth and Expansion	7
---------------------------	---

LECTURE 3

Second Century and Self-Definition	11
--	----

LECTURE 4

The Christian Story.....	15
--------------------------	----

LECTURE 5

What Christians Believe	18
-------------------------------	----

LECTURE 6

The Church and Sacraments.....	21
--------------------------------	----

LECTURE 7

Moral Teaching	24
----------------------	----

LECTURE 8

The Radical Edge.....	27
-----------------------	----

LECTURE 9

Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant	30
--------------------------------------	----

Table of Contents

LECTURE 10

Christianity and Politics	34
---------------------------------	----

LECTURE 11

Christianity and Culture	39
--------------------------------	----

LECTURE 12

Tensions and Possibilities.....	43
---------------------------------	----

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Timeline	46
Glossary/Biographical Notes	52
Bibliography.....	64

Great World Religions: Christianity

Scope:

Christianity is one of religion's great success stories. Beginning as a sect of Judaism in an obscure province of the Roman Empire in the 1st century C.E., it became the official religion of the Roman Empire by the 4th century, dominated the cultural life of Europe for much of its history, and now counts more than two billion adherents throughout the world.

Christianity is also one of the most paradoxical of religions. While bearing a message of peace and unity, it has often been a source of conflict and division. While proclaiming a heavenly kingdom, it has often been deeply involved with human politics. While rejecting worldly wisdom, it has claimed the intellectual allegiance of great minds. These apparent contradictions arise from the complex character of Christianity's claims about God, the world, and above all, Jesus of Nazareth, whose death and resurrection form the heart of the good news proclaimed by this religious tradition.

This course provides a sense of Christianity as a whole in its most essential features. It cannot hope to deal in detail with all the complex variations that have entered into a tradition that has lasted two millennia and extended itself to every nation and virtually every language. The lectures concentrate on the basics. They seek to provide a clear survey of the most important elements of this religious tradition and a framework for the student's further study.

After an opening presentation that situates Christianity among the other world religions, the second and third lectures cover the birth and first expansion of Christianity across the Mediterranean world and its great crisis of self-definition in the middle and late 2nd century. The next five lectures are synthetic in character, providing first an overview of the Christian story (how it understands history from creation to new creation—and the relation of Scripture to that history), the Christian creed (what Christians believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the church), and a sense of Christian practice as expressed, in turn, by the structure of the community and its

sacraments, by the struggles of Christians to find a coherent and consistent moral teaching, and by various manifestations of Christianity's more radical edge in martyrs, monks, mendicants, missionaries, and mystics.

The final four lectures deal with internal and external conflicts. The first of these is the division of Christianity into three great families: Orthodox,



Dore Bible Illustrations, Courtesy of Dover Pictorial Archive Series.

Jesus of Nazareth's resurrection from the dead gives birth to this religious movement, and in the further sense Jesus's human story—his words, actions, and manner of death—remain central to Christian identity.

Roman Catholic, and Protestant. The second is the centuries-long struggle to find an appropriate role within the political structures of society. The third is Christianity's past and present engagement with culture and the life of the mind, with particular emphasis on the impact of the Enlightenment. The final lecture takes up the tensions in Christianity today—especially the struggle in the First World between fundamentalism and modernity—and the possibilities for this ancient yet lively religion's future among developing nations.

At the end, students will have a grasp of Christianity's distinctive character, the major turning points in its history, its most important shared beliefs and practices, its sharp internal divisions, its struggles to adapt to changing circumstances, and some sense of its continuing appeal to many of the world's peoples. ■

Christianity among World Religions

Lecture 1

A world religion is one whose experience and convictions succeed in organizing a way of life beyond local, ethnic, or national boundaries. ... By any measure, Christianity must be considered one of the world religions.

This class introduces Christianity as a world religion. The obvious first questions to ask are: “What is a religion?” and “What is a world religion?” *Religion* can be defined as “a way of life organized around experiences and convictions concerning ultimate power.” The phrase “organized way of life” suggests both the pervasiveness of religious sensibility and the structure of religion, involving specific practices. The phrase “experiences and convictions” points to the way religion responds to and understands the world. The phrase “ultimate power” distinguishes religion from other ways of organizing life.

A world religion is one whose experience and convictions succeed in organizing a way of life beyond local, ethnic, or national boundaries. Some traditions are circumscribed by area, culture, or ethnicity but are considered world religions because of their influence (Hinduism, Judaism). Some traditions have reached beyond local circumstances to encompass many populations and cultures (Buddhism, Islam, Christianity). Some traditions reach the status of world religions, then lose it (Manichaeism).

Christianity claims more adherents than any other religion and is the dominant tradition among many diverse populations. It has 2,000 years of history, making it younger than Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, but older than Islam. It is complex both in terms of its internal development and in terms of its engagement with culture. It is remarkably various in its manifestations, existing not only in three distinct groupings (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant), but in thousands of specific styles. Most of the world operates on a dating system that revolves around the birth of Jesus: B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (*anno Domini*).

As a world religion, Christianity's profile is at once distinctive and paradoxical. Christianity has a strong resemblance to other "Western religions," such as Judaism and Islam, yet has distinctive features. All three traditions are monotheistic and view God as creator, revealer, savior, and judge. All are structurally exoteric, yet have strong mystical tendencies. Christianity's claim that Jesus is divine fundamentally alters each of the elements that this tradition shares with Judaism and Islam. Christianity also bears comparison with Buddhism on some important points. Both traditions are grounded in the experience of a specific historical person who becomes the symbolic center around which life is organized. Both traditions have aggressively entered into competition with other religious traditions through practices of proselytism.

More than any other world religion, Christianity is marked by paradox both in its fundamental claims and in its historical manifestations.

More than any other world religion, Christianity is marked by paradox both in its fundamental claims and in its historical manifestations. The "Christ" in Christianity is

remarkable for the disparity between his historical life and the significance of his death (and resurrection). Christianity has constantly experienced the tension between proclaimed ideals and lived realities.

An introduction to Christianity makes use of certain basic terms that apply to other traditions as well but have specific meaning in Christianity. The *founder* is the figure regarded by the tradition either as channel or agent of revelation and, often, as the organizer of the way of life. The *community* refers to the members of the way of life and to the forms of organization they may observe. *Scripture* or *sacred texts* are those writings that are regarded as normative for the experiences and convictions of the religious tradition. *Myth* does not mean falsehood but, rather, a story that tries to communicate truths that history cannot. Often, myths have to do with how God is at work among humans. *Doctrine* means the organized and normative form of teaching that guides the religious way of life. *Ritual* refers to those practices by which religions demarcate *sacred time* and *sacred space* through repetitive communal (and often individual) activities (see also *liturgy*). *Morality* is the code of behavior that is considered to follow from the religious experiences

and convictions of adherents. *Mysticism* refers specifically to the means by which direct experience of ultimate power is sought within a tradition or, more widely, to practices of prayer and meditation.

This class provides a survey of the most important elements in Christianity and a framework for students' further study. The first two lectures deal with Christianity's birth and expansion across the Mediterranean world in the 1st century of the common era and its crisis of self-definition in the late 2nd century. The following lectures are synthetic, providing an overview of the Christian story, creed, community and worship, moral teaching, and mysticism. The final four lectures address internal and external conflicts: the division into three rival versions, the struggle with politics, the engagement with culture, and tensions within Christianity today. ■

Supplemental Reading

P. Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Atheneum, 1976).

M. J. Weaver, *Introduction to Christianity*, 3rd edition, with D. Bakke and J. Bivins (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press, 1998).

Questions to Consider

1. Why does the classification "world religion" involve more than the number of adherents claimed by a tradition?
2. Compare Christianity and Buddhism in terms of their respective founders and ideas of salvation.

Birth and Expansion

Lecture 2

How did a small sect within 1st-century Judaism become a world religion?

Jesus of Nazareth both is and is not the founder of Christianity. He is not the founder of the religion in the sense that Muhammad is the founder of Islam or even in the sense that Prince Siddharta is the founder of Buddhism: Christianity begins after Jesus's death. Yet Jesus is more than a purely symbolic figure. He is the "founder" of Christianity in the sense that his resurrection from the dead gives birth to a religious movement and in the sense that his human story remains central to Christian identity.

The historical activity of Jesus is difficult to reconstruct with precision but is best understood as a form of prophetic activity within Judaism that is marked by particular urgency and authority and whose proclamation of God's rule issues in a nascent community. The difficulties of historical reconstruction are attributable to the fact that, apart from a few outsider reports, we are dependent on insider Christian writings, above all, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whose narratives depend on an earlier oral tradition and are told from the perspective of faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

Despite these difficulties, we can state definite things about the historical Jesus. His characteristic speech and action identify him as a prophetic figure in the symbolic world of Torah. His proclamation of the rule of God and call to repentance has a special sense of urgency and a special appeal to the outcast. Although the designations *Son of man* and *Christ* are problematic for his lifetime, he speaks and acts with a distinctive sense of authority. His choice of 12 followers symbolizes the restoration of Israel as God's people. In the context of a deeply divided 1st-century Judaism, Jesus met conflict with Jewish leaders and was executed by crucifixion under Roman authority.

Christianity is born as a religion centered on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ through the resurrection experience. The proper understanding of the Resurrection is critical to grasping Christianity's claims. The claim is not

that Jesus was resuscitated and continued his mortal existence but that he transcended mortality by entering into a share in God's life and power. The essential designation of Jesus as "Lord" signifies that Jesus has been exalted to the status of God and has become "Life-Giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45). The Resurrection is not historical but eschatological, a "new creation" that transforms humans through a new power of life.

The Resurrection is the basis for other fundamental convictions concerning Jesus. The Resurrection reveals what Jesus was already in his mortal life, namely, God's unique Son. The Resurrection is the premise for the expectation that Jesus will come again as judge of the world. The Resurrection makes Jesus not simply a Jewish messiah (in fact, he fails at that) but establishes him as "a new Adam," the start of a new humanity. The Resurrection is the basis for Christianity becoming a worldwide religion rather than a sect within Judaism.

The Christian movement established communities across the Roman Empire with unparalleled rapidity, and the conditions of its expansion meant that it was diverse from the beginning.

The Christian movement established communities across the Roman Empire with unparalleled rapidity, and the conditions of its expansion meant that it was diverse from the beginning. In the span of 25 years, churches (*ekklesiai*) had been founded from Jerusalem to Rome. The expansion testifies to the power of religious experience, because it was accompanied by persecution and lacked central controls. From the beginning, Christians managed five critical transitions: geographical, sociological, linguistic, cultural, and demographic. The movement was powerful but diverse. By far the most significant transition was the inclusion of Gentile believers without any requirement of observing Jewish customs.

Our earliest Christian letters testify to the liveliness of the religious spirit in these communities and to their problems as well. Paul's letters (for example, 1 Cor) reveal communities meeting in households, manifesting a variety of "spiritual gifts," and practicing common rituals. They also show the presence

of severe disagreements concerning the proper way to translate the powerful experience of the Resurrection into consistent patterns of behavior.

The New Testament is a collection of 27 compositions in Greek that were written before the end of the 1st century in response to the needs of early communities. For the first believers, *Scripture* was the Jewish Bible, and each writing in the New Testament represents a reinterpretation of the Jewish Scripture in light of the experience of a crucified and raised messiah. The New Testament contains 13 letters attributed to Paul (the Apostle to the Gentiles), 2 to Peter, 3 to John, 1 each to James and Jude, and an anonymous sermon addressed “to the Hebrews,” as well as a historical narrative concerning the first generation (the Acts of the Apostles) and a visionary composition called the Book of Revelation. These writings concentrate on the life and practice of the church and reveal the complexity and energy of the movement. In them, Jesus appears mainly as the present and powerful Lord, but his human example also plays a role.

The New Testament also contains 4 narratives called Gospels that are attributed (in probably chronological sequence) to Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. These narratives provide a rich collection of Jesus’s sayings and deeds as remembered by a community that now believed in him as Lord of creation. The evangelists tell and retell the story of Jesus in a manner that instructs the church in discipleship. Although they use shared traditions and although Matthew, Mark, and Luke (the synoptic Gospels) are literarily interdependent, the Gospels are remarkable for their diverse portrayals of Jesus. Equally remarkable, although written from the perspective of faith, they render the human Jesus as a 1st-century Jew with remarkable accuracy. ■

Essential Reading

Acts of the Apostles.

Gospel of Luke.

Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians.

Supplemental Reading

Luke T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, 2nd revised edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

Questions to Consider

1. Consider the complex understanding of Jesus as Christianity's founder, both with regard to his human history and his Resurrection. How can this give rise to a variety of interpretations?
2. Why is the Resurrection of Jesus such a key to the understanding of Christianity, especially as a "world religion"?

Second Century and Self-Definition

Lecture 3

Jesus of Nazareth both is, and is not, the founder of Christianity.

In the beginning of the 2nd century of the common era, Christianity was an identifiable presence across the Roman Empire whose development was natural and organic but also bore the marks of its first creative expansion. The most obvious feature was the dominance of Gentile Christianity and of Greco-Roman culture. Christianity was more successful in attracting Gentiles than Jews, and after the Jewish War of 67–70, Jewish Christians were less visible. Sociologically and symbolically, Christian churches resembled Greco-Roman schools more than Jewish synagogues. As communities began to exchange and collect their writings, the question of how Christianity did or did not connect to Judaism was inevitable. The Christian martyr Justin's dialogue with the Jew Trypho, written around 135 A.D., marks the last face-to-face encounter of Christianity and Judaism for a long time.

The sparse literature of the early 2nd century reveals a movement that was diverse and sometimes divided, concerned for moral teaching and practice, and eager to offer a defense against attackers. Bishops (such as Ignatius and Polycarp) emerge as intellectual and moral leaders of communities, but the voice of prophecy was still alive (Hermas). Letters written between communities show less concern for doctrine or theology than for moral behavior and unity (see 1 Clement). The danger of being Christian is revealed by martyrdom (see Ignatius and Polycarp) and apologetic literature (Diognetus, Justin).

The second half of the 2nd century generated forms of diversity that challenged the Christian movement in fundamental ways and demanded a more explicit form of self-definition. A strong tendency toward cosmic dualism and religious asceticism appeared in the 2nd century in a variety of forms. It is not entirely an internal Christian phenomenon, although its effects on Christianity are impressive. It is not entirely "heterodox" in character, being found as well in popular Christian writings that do not challenge common convictions (see Infancy Gospel of James, Acts of Paul). The blanket term *Gnosticism* covers

a wide range of Christian ascetical and dualistic tendencies that powerfully challenge the nature of the religious movement.

One form of the challenge moved in the direction of contracting traditional texts and tenets. The Assyrian apologist Tatian advocated a complete rejection of the world through an ascetic lifestyle. He proposed the *Diatesseron* as a single witness, instead of the four Gospels. Marcion of Sinope proposed a radical dualism that identified the God of the Old Testament with evil and, in his *Antitheses*, called for the rejection of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament except 10 letters of Paul and a shortened version of Luke's Gospel.

Another strongly ascetical tendency moved in the direction of expanding the courses of authority. Our knowledge of this tendency derives both from the descriptions of ancient opponents and from the Nag-Hammadi library, discovered in 1947. Both Sethian and Valentinian forms of Gnostic teaching challenged traditional teaching in favor of continuing revelation



Corel Stock Photo Library.

Constantine was the first Christian emperor. His conversion and edict of toleration (the Edict of Milan in 313) reversed the political and cultural fortunes of Christianity.

and produced a plethora of “inspired” literature that contained an ascetic ideology. The challenge of new teachers, new teaching, and new scripture was both frontal and massive. It proposed a version of Christianity that was individualistic and opposed to the order of creation.

the orthodox party took its stand on a *canon of scripture* that consisted of the Old Testament and 27 writings of the New Testament.

The response of orthodox teachers to this complex challenge had profound consequences for the shape of Christianity through the centuries.

The production of “anti-heretical” literature by such leaders as Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria emphasized the importance of “right thinking” (orthodoxy) within this religious tradition. Irenaeus, in particular, developed (in his *Against Heresies*) a well-balanced response to the Gnostic challenge. Rather than a truncated or expanded collection of writings, the orthodox party took its stand on a *canon of scripture* that consisted of the Old Testament and 27 writings of the New Testament. Rather than a widely diverse set of myths, the orthodox party insisted on a *rule of faith* that defined traditional beliefs. Rather than many inspired teachers, the orthodox party claimed an *apostolic succession* of public leaders, called the bishops, who maintained tradition. The strategy of self-definition used in the battle with Gnosticism became standard for later internal conflicts: Bishops gathered in council to study Scripture and elaborate the creed.

At the beginning of the 3rd century, Christianity was internally prepared for its long period of political and cultural influence that began with Constantine in 313 C.E. The process of self-definition was not only conceptual: The church that emerged was embodied, public, institutional, and ritual, in character. The communion among the orthodox bishops made them visible leaders in the empire, while protest forms of Christianity sought refuge outside the empire. ■

Essential Reading

“The Letters of Ignatius of Antioch,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, translated by Kirsopp Lake (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915).

“The Gospel of Truth,” in *The Gnostic Scriptures*, translated by Bentley Layton (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987).

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, revised by A. C. Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

Supplemental Reading

P. Carrington, *The Early Christian Church*, vol. 2: *The Second Christian Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

W. H. Wagner, *After the Apostles: Christianity in the Second Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

Questions to Consider

1. What would Christianity have become had the movements led by Marcion and Valentinus been victorious?
2. Comment on this proposition: “Second-century conflicts were battles over ideas with nothing important at stake.”

The Christian Story

Lecture 4

Christianity is both deeply historical and mythical in its way of seeing the world. History and myth come together in the Christian story, which provides a comprehensive narrative that extends from the creation of the world to the end of time.

To be Christian means to share a story about the world from beginning to end. The “story character” of Christianity is one of the consequences of the conflict with Gnosticism, because story bears implications concerning the significance of physical bodies and time. Part of that story is found in texts shared with Judaism (the Old Testament); part is found in the distinctive Christian scriptures (the New Testament); and part, in the developments of the religion over a 2,000-year existence.

The Christian story combines three distinct aspects of temporality: the historical, the mythical, and the eschatological. Christians claim the historical character of much of the story told in the Bible, especially the part concerning Jesus. Yet the designation of *myth* is appropriate for other parts of the story (see the primordial origins) and for all of the story in part (see the transcendental claim made for empirical events). Christians also struggle with the notion of *eschatology* (literally, “last things”), both with respect to the future and the present.

The Christian story before Jesus is understood as a time of anticipation and promise. Christians share with Jews the accounts of creation, the tales of the Patriarchs, the saga of the Exodus and Conquest, the recital of kings, of exiles, and of restorations, but read them from a different perspective. For Jews, the center of Scripture is the revelation of God’s Law at Sinai, while for Christians, it is the revelation of God through human and social events. Christians see the ancient story as providing the basic framework for a relationship between God and humans (the covenant) and as a promise that leads to a historical climax in the coming of the Messiah. In particular,

Christians read the prophetic literature, not only in terms of the ancient social and religious criticism leveled by the Jewish prophets, but also in terms of the prediction of Jesus as Messiah. Christians, like Jews, read Amos and Jeremiah and Isaiah as powerful voices of reform, calling Israel to faithfulness to the covenant. Unlike Jews, they see many passages in Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel as having their fuller meaning in the future.

The Christian story combines three distinct aspects of temporality: the historical, the mythical, and the eschatological.

Christians see Jesus both as the fulfillment of prophecy and as the inauguration of God's rule. In his human ministry, Jesus announces the "rule of God" and symbolizes its power through his works

of healing and exorcism. By his Resurrection, Jesus shares God's rule as "Lord" over the church and even the cosmos. The earliest Christian writings conceive of the story in terms of an "already and not yet." The Resurrection of Jesus is the "first fruits" of a cosmic victory that has still not been fully realized. The *parousia* (Second Coming) of Jesus will represent God's final triumph over sin and death.

Christians approach the 2,000-year-long story of the church from multiple perspectives. Christians agree on dividing Christian history into discrete stages that combine religious and secular dimensions: apostolic, patristic, medieval, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, modern, contemporary. The religious or theological assessment of the discrete periods is, however, controverted among Christians.

Christians share the conviction that their story has a goal, but they have less agreement concerning what that goal is. The notion of the "age to come" or the "world to come" has fluctuated in its importance at different periods of Christianity's history. Even Christians with a strong sense of eschatology have a variety of versions of what the future holds. ■

Essential Reading

Book of Revelation.

Gospel of Matthew.

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians.

Supplemental Reading

R. M. Grant, with David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, 2nd revised and enlarged edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

J. L. Kugel and R.A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

Questions to Consider

1. In light of this presentation, consider what elements of the “Christian story” are best designated as *myth*, *history*, or *eschatology*.
2. Compare and contrast the understanding of *Scripture* held respectively by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

What Christians Believe

Lecture 5

Today, we consider the creed, what Christians believe. ... In contrast to many religions, belief or doctrine holds a disproportionately important part in Christianity.

Belief, or doctrine, occupies an unusually central place in Christianity, compared to other religious traditions. Some religions, including Judaism and Islam, place more emphasis on *orthopraxy* (“right practice”) than on *orthodoxy* (“right opinion”). The Christian emphasis on belief is connected to its origins and early development. Its beginnings as a Jewish sect required making a choice for Jesus as Messiah and Lord. The experience of Jesus among followers gave rise to diverse understandings, requiring ever more elaborate statements of belief as a means of self-definition.

Christian belief is expressed formally by creeds and doctrines that have developed over time in response to internal conflict. The rudimentary statements of belief in the New Testament developed into the Apostles’ Creed. The standard expression of faith for most Christians is the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (325–381). Although all Christians emphasize belief, no single creed commands the assent of all Christians. Some groups have developed creedal statements that reflect their particular perspectives (see the Westminster Confession). Other groups reject the classic creeds but nevertheless retain certain convictions as a lens for reading Scripture.

Although Christianity is correctly called a monotheistic religion, its understanding of a triune God is complex. As in Judaism and Islam, “God” is considered first as the all-powerful creator of all things “visible and invisible” and, as the source of all reality, is termed “Father.” But Christians also confess as God “the Son,” who shares fully in the divine life and power. This son entered human history as Jesus Christ, the savior. Finally, the “Holy Spirit” is equally God, “worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son.” Christians consider that the way God is revealed through creation,

salvation, and sanctification truly discloses the inner life of God as “three persons in one nature.”

After centuries of debate concerning the work and nature of Jesus, Christians came to an equally complex understanding of Christology. The New Testament ascribes both divine and human attributes to Jesus, and both have been considered essential to the full appreciation of the savior. A heresy called *Monophysitism* so emphasized the divinity of Jesus that it virtually suppressed his humanity. Another heresy called *Nestorianism* emphasized Jesus’s humanity to the extent that his divine nature seemed neglected. The Council of Chalcedon (451) declared that the orthodox understanding of Jesus must recognize that he is “two natures in one person”; that is, he is “true God and true man.” Because the orthodox position is also profoundly paradoxical, Christian practice and piety have tended to focus either on the humanity or on the divinity of Jesus.

**The creed leaves
relatively undeveloped
the nature and work of
the Holy Spirit,**

The creed leaves relatively undeveloped the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, and the appreciation for the Holy Spirit varies among Christian groups. The Holy Spirit “speaks through the prophets” and is active in God’s self-revelation to humans. The Holy Spirit is active also in the process of human transformation that Christians call “sanctification.”

The creed contains other affirmations that provide a frame for Christian identity and the basis for a coherent view of the world:

- Creation is good in all its aspects, but “sin” is a disordered use of the world by humans.
- Humans will be judged on the basis of their deeds.
- The church is a community that seeks to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

- The present age prepares for God's final triumph in "the world to come." ■

Essential Reading

J. H. Leith, *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982).

Supplemental Reading

L.T. Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised edition (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1960).

Questions to Consider

1. Why is "right belief" so critical to Christianity, in contrast to other religions?
2. Is Christianity "monotheistic" in the same sense that Judaism and Islam are monotheistic?
3. Comment on this proposition: "The Christian view of the world is more optimistic than pessimistic, and the Christian drama is more comedy than tragedy."

The Church and Sacraments

Lecture 6

The most dramatic and unexpected development in Christianity happened by accident, though at the time it appeared to be divine providence.

The conflict with Gnosticism had defined Christianity as an embodied and institutional religion, but the establishment of Christianity as the imperial religion had a profound effect on its public presence. Its status shifted from that of a persecuted minority to a state-sponsored majority; fervor was no longer a requirement of membership. It changed overnight from a group that met secretly in households and catacombs to an organization in charge of basilicas and public charities. Although the local congregation was still of fundamental importance, an elaborate superstructure of administration for the church matched that of the empire.

Although from its earliest days Christianity had forms of structure drawn from Greco-Roman and Jewish antecedents, its growth and public involvement led to elaborate patterns of hierarchy. Even before Constantine, the simple administrative structure reflected in the Pauline letters had become more hierarchical. A single bishop (*episcopos*) emerged as head over a board of elders (*presbyteroi*) and deacons (*diakonoi*). This arrangement was legitimated in terms of cultic language (priesthood/sacrifice). Christianity thenceforth consisted of two great classes: the clergy and the laity. Under empire, hierarchical structures became even more elaborate, both at the local level (orders of clergy leading to priesthood and episcopacy) and at the regional level (patriarchs). The patriarch of the imperial city (Rome, then Constantinople) asserted authority over the entire “ecumenical” church.

With the expansion of the church’s structure and its occupation of great public spaces for worship its own liturgy (public worship) also became more elaborate. In the few glimpses of early Christian worship given by the New Testament, baptism and the Lord’s Supper emerge as two ritual activities, centered in the experience of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the imperial period, both expand in dramatic ways as liturgy grows to fill the

space allotted to it. The basilicas have a fundamental structure of a long hallway, called a *nave*, at the end of which is usually a circular space called the *apse*. In the apse is the sanctuary, where the ritual activity is centered. The later Gothic cathedrals have a *transept*, a horizontal expansion in the nave, so that the church takes on the form of the cross. In this large space, the clergy and priests carry out the activities of worship, while members of the congregation become observers. The clergy take on vestments, processions, music, incense, and bells, the accoutrements of a public event. Baptism becomes an elaborate and public ritual of initiation at the Easter Vigil that is preceded by months of preparation. The Eucharist (Mass), as celebrated by a bishop in a basilica, loses much of its quality as a meal and gains a quality of public, even civic, ceremony.

Christianity reached into every aspect of life, finding ways of sanctifying time and space.

Christianity reached into every aspect of life, finding ways of sanctifying time and space. The sanctification of time was both communal and individual. The sacraments of the church grew beyond baptism and the Eucharist to include confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, penance, and the anointing of the sick. The “liturgical year” sanctified time through the celebration of the events of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection in two great cycles: the Easter cycle and the Christmas cycle. Martyrs and confessors were considered as “saints” whose lives revealed the power of the divine in Christ and were exemplary and efficacious for other believers.

The sanctification of space developed later but reflected the same impulse to bring everything into the realm of the sacred. Pilgrimage to “holy places” (especially the Holy Land) begins in the 4th century and grows in popularity. Reverence for the tombs of the martyrs grows into the cult of relics, which extends their influence through space and time. ■

Essential Reading

B. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961).

Supplemental Reading

D. Bloesch, *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission* (Christian Foundations; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2nd edition (New York: Seabury Press, 1982).

J. Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (New York: Continuum, 1997).

Questions to Consider

1. What complexities entered into Christianity as a result of its steady growth in numbers and its adaptation as the imperial religion?
2. Discuss the concept of *sanctification* as it is manifested in sacraments, saints, and sacred sites.
3. How does the liturgical year create an alternative world to that of secular time and activity?

Moral Teaching

Lecture 7

Christianity has struggled mightily to shape a consistent moral message that is consonant with its central religious experiences and convictions.

Compared to other Western religions, the moral teaching of Christianity is complex and, in some respects, confusing. Both Judaism and Islam are committed to law (Torah, Shariah) as the adequate expression of moral values. Christianity, in contrast, has struggled to shape a consistent moral message that is consonant with its central experiences and convictions. In part, this is the result of an ambivalence about the law, grounded in the experience of Jesus as one condemned by the norm of Torah. In part, this is due to Christianity's early experience of the Holy Spirit and personal transformation into the image of Christ. In part, this stems from Christianity's beginning as a persecuted sect rather than as a vision for society at large. In part, this arises from the severe conflicts of the 2nd century around issues of asceticism.

As it developed, Christianity drew on three main sources for its moral teaching. (1) The Law of Moses (Torah) continued to play a key role in shaping Christian morality. Christians distinguished (as Jews did not) between the ritual commandments, which no longer applied, and the moral commandments, which did. In particular, Christians accepted the binding force of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–27; Deut. 5:6–21) and the commandment to love the neighbor as the self (Lev. 19:18). (2) The teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) is regarded as of central importance for Christian morality. Jesus is understood as reinterpreting Torah through interiorization, intensification, and radicalization. Jesus identifies as the two “great commandments” the love of God and the love of neighbor (see Matt. 22:34–40). Jesus issues a call to discipleship that demands radical renunciation of parents, property, and marriage. And (3) The experience of the Holy Spirit consequent on the Resurrection of Jesus served as both the source and shaper of moral life (Galatians 5:25). Both virginity and martyrdom can be seen as bodily

expressions of belief in the resurrection life. The Spirit enabled believers to have “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16) that guided their moral reasoning. An emphasis on interior disposition made the following of one’s conscience, rather than an external norm, paramount (1 Cor. 8–10).

From the start, Christianity has also drawn on other moral norms to supplement the three main authorities. In the New Testament itself, Greco-Roman moral exhortation finds expression in the lists of vices and virtues, in the tables of household ethics, and in the appropriation of such ideals as contentment or self-sufficiency. In the medieval period, Scholastic moral theology made extensive use of Aristotle’s ethics of virtue. At times, Christian moral teaching has been closely linked to ecclesiastical law, leading to forms of moral casuistry.

The writings of the New Testament are ill-fitted to providing moral guidance for a society.

The struggle for a consistent public moral stance has characterized Christianity for much of its history. Christianity’s first focus as a struggling sect was on its own identity vis-à-vis Judaism and Hellenism, rather than on legislating for society as a whole. The writings of the New Testament are ill-fitted to providing moral guidance for a society. Christians have adopted a spectrum of positions, from the absolute renunciation of the world to ruling the world. The fundamental struggle for most Christians today is between a highly individualistic ethic (spirituality) and a highly engaged ethic (liberation/political theology). ■

Essential Reading

Gospel of Matthew, 5–7.

W. A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

Supplemental Reading

R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

A. Verhey, *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

Questions to Consider

1. Why has Christianity struggled to construct a coherent moral teaching?
2. How adequately does “the law of love” comprehend Christian ethics?

The Radical Edge

Lecture 8

Throughout its history, certain Christians looked to elements in the New Testament that pointed to a more radical form of discipleship as warrant for their pursuit of a more heroic path.

The battle for self-definition in the 2nd century made “the great church” a public organization that included people with a wide range of commitment and fervor. The orthodox party rejected the position of the Gnostics that only the “enlightened” (or *pneumatic*) were saved, while the *psychic* had some chance, and the “ordinary people” (the *hylic*) had no future. The subsequent establishment of the church under Constantine, the safe and even privileged place of the church, encouraged membership with minimal commitment.

Certain Christians have appealed to elements in the New Testament that pointed to a more radical form of discipleship as a warrant for their pursuit of a more heroic path.¹ The letters of Paul contain certain utopian tendencies, such as the breakdown of ethnic, gender, and class differences, that stand in tension with life in the Hellenistic household. The story of Jesus presents an itinerant preacher, and some of his sayings demand the rejection of family and possessions and the willingness to “bear the cross” after him. The Book of Acts portrays the ideal church in terms of a complete sharing of possessions.

The Book of Revelation envisages a community of saints and prophets who resist the political and economic power of the great beast. Jesus appears to be asexual and dies violently as a martyr; Paul is not married and dies violently as a martyr; Peter dies as a martyr; and virginity, martyrdom, and poverty are holy qualities for early Christians.

Many of those called “saints” in the Christian tradition have, in various ways, sought to challenge not only the way of the world but also too comfortable an existence within the church. In the first centuries, martyrdom and virginity were modes of testifying to a radical belief in the Resurrection and

a resistance to conventional notions of success or salvation. From at least the 3rd century forward, many have espoused the ideal of *fuga mundi* (“flee the world”) in a variety of monastic forms. Hermits and anchorites live in complete or semi-solitude, devoting their lives to prayer. The sayings of the hermits (aphoristic words of wisdom) are currently enjoying popularity among those seeking to expand their spiritual lives. A major development in monasticism was the work of Benedict of Nursia, who wrote a rule for monks to live in celibate communities organized around shared possessions, work, and prayer.

Missionaries have carried the gospel to foreign lands in obedience to the command of Jesus to “make disciples of all nations.” (Matt. 28:20)

Mendicants and millenarians have likewise embodied a radical vision of Christian existence. Mendicants imitated the poverty of Jesus and depended on the support of others who are less radical in lifestyle. The first mendicant was Saint Francis of Assisi, who founded the Franciscan order. Millenarian Christians have taken the Book of Revelation very seriously and have organized their lives in anticipation of that book’s vision of the imminent coming of Jesus by instituting a community of possessions on earth. (See Thomas Muentzer and the radical Reformation in Germany.) This belief often leads to disaster, as exemplified in recent history by the tragedy of David Koresh and the Branch Davidians.

Missionaries have carried the gospel to foreign lands in obedience to the command of Jesus to “make disciples of



© iStockphoto/ Thinkstock

Paul becomes a great missionary to the Gentiles, going on three missionary journeys throughout Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia.

all nations” (Matt. 28:20), experiencing as a result, the same persecution, separation from family, and poverty.

Another manifestation of the “radical edge” in Christianity, though subtler, is the practice of mysticism. In every religion, mysticism represents the effort to seek an unmediated access to the divine presence and power. By its nature, mysticism threatens the ordinary structures of sacred mediation. Jesus and Paul were themselves undoubtedly mystics, and the history of Christianity is punctuated by a variety of forms of mysticism. Radical forms of Christianity have served as catalysts of reform, but they have also, at times, served as causes of division. ■

Essential Reading

Benedict of Nursia, *Rule for Monks*.

Supplemental Reading

J. Aumann et. al., *Monasticism: A Historical Overview* (Still River, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 1984).

W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967).

B. McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, 3 vols. (New York: Crossroad, 2000).

Questions to Consider

1. What elements of continuity can be discerned among martyrdom, monasticism, and mysticism?
2. How does the “radical edge” in Christianity serve both as a catalyst to reform and as a threat to stability?

Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant

Lecture 9

This is one of the paradoxes of the Christian religion; it is a religion that has had unity as an ideal, and yet throughout its history has experienced conflict and division.

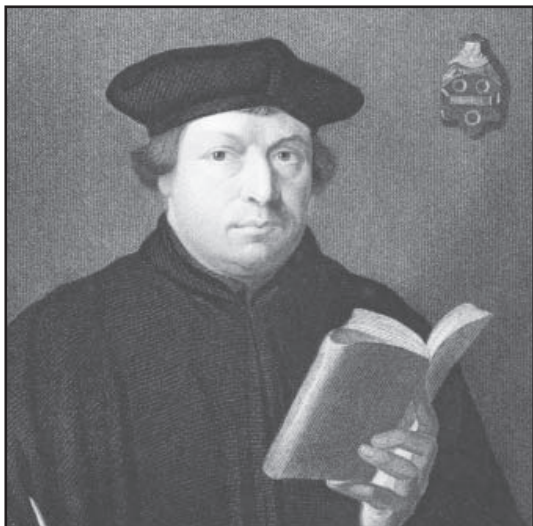
The ideal of unity is expressed in the New Testament and is stated by the creed as one of the four “marks of the church.” The early centuries were marked by a variety of severe conflicts concerning belief and practice: The New Testament shows sharp disagreements between Christian groups (see Galatians, 2 and 3 John); the 2nd century struggle for self-definition involved sharp ideological and political divisions; and the battles involving Trinitarian and Christological doctrine in the 4th and 5th centuries likewise had ecclesiastical and political overtones. The three great families in Christianity arose from specific contentious circumstances between the 11th and 16th centuries and led to three distinct and usually competing versions of the religion. Each of them claims to best represent the essence of Christianity. Each of them claims a particular kind of continuity with Christian origins. All of them share the same basic story, creed, and moral teaching but differ most on questions of organization, theological emphasis, and worship.

The Roman Catholic tradition claims simply to be “catholic” but the designation *Roman* signifies what distinguishes it from Orthodoxy and Protestantism. Catholics share the basic elements sketched in earlier lectures and regard them as essential to its claim of a continuous tradition reaching back to the Apostle Peter. The organization of the church is universal and hierarchical, with authority coming from the Bishop of Rome (the pope), through archbishops and bishops, to the local clergy and laity of dioceses throughout the world. The Catholic clergy is all male, is celibate, and has a sacramental focus. The ministry of local parish priests is supplemented by that of active religious orders, such as the Jesuits and Dominicans. Catholicism claims and cultivates a powerful intellectual tradition reaching from Augustine and other patristic authors, through Aquinas and other Scholastic masters, to contemporary philosophers and theologians. The

sacramental piety of Catholicism extends to devotion to the “communion of saints,” among whom Mary, the Mother of Jesus, receives most attention.

The Orthodox tradition also claims continuity with the earliest church. Indeed, the embrace of “holy tradition” (*hagia paradosis*) is emphatic in a version of Christianity that eschews change. Orthodoxy shares most with Catholicism. The two camps split as a result of schism in 1054, the climax of centuries of growing tension between the old Rome and the “New Rome” of Constantinople. Political rivalry between capitals was expressed by religious rivalry between patriarchates, and the Latin-speaking West (facing the rapid changes subsequent on barbarian invasions) grew culturally apart from the more stable Greek-speaking East. Specific causes of schism involved diplomatic misunderstandings and the theological dustup around the phrase “and the Son” (*filioque*) in the creed.

The Orthodox tradition is dominant in Greece, Russia, the Slavic nations, Turkey, Cyprus, and the Middle East. Organization is patriarchal, with special honor given to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Local clergy are married, but the long-standing monastic tradition is celibate, and bishops are drawn from among monks. Orthodox spirituality is rich and complex, with particular emphasis on anapophatic mysticism. The veneration of the saints is reflected in the use of icons in liturgy and in contemplative prayer. The resistance to the iconoclastic movement within Orthodoxy (influenced by Islam) was a defining moment in shaping this tradition’s character. Orthodoxy is centered in worship.



Martin Luther (1483–1546), German theologian and religious reformer.

The liturgy is regarded as a participation in the heavenly worship and is a powerfully moving and transforming experience.

The Protestant tradition began in the 16th century as an attempt to reform what was regarded as the corrupt Catholicism of the late-medieval period. Although symbolically connected to the figure of Martin Luther and John Calvin, the Reformation took many forms from the beginning and has developed in distinct ways. The overall feature that most distinguishes Protestantism from Catholicism and Orthodoxy is its emphasis on verbal revelation, preaching, and Scripture. The Lutheran tradition emphasized a return to Scripture as the norm for Christian life and a concentration on faith as the means of being in right relationship with God. It is found especially among Germanic and Nordic populations.

The Anglican tradition began as a schismatic break with Rome by King Henry VIII but, under Thomas Cranmer, developed a distinctive reform of the Catholic tradition, reflected above all, in the forms of piety found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Anglicans (or Anglo-Catholics, or Episcopalians) are primarily English speaking. This tradition uses both ancient tradition and reason in its reading of Scripture and is, therefore, characterized by a highly intellectual character.

In the 18th century, Methodism began as a lay reform movement within Anglicanism that emphasized fervent piety in imitation of the ancient monks. Methodists, in addition to Scripture, tradition, and reason as norms for their lives, add, revealingly, experience. The Methodist (or Wesleyan) tradition places a high premium on experience and the transformation of the heart.

The Reformed tradition began in France and Switzerland with John Calvin but achieved great success among English-speaking populations under John Knox. Strict and intellectually rigorous, the Presbyterian tradition embraces the doctrine of predestination and elicits an enthusiastic commitment to good works.

The Anabaptist (meaning, “to be baptized again”) movement in 16th-century Germany emphasized free and intentional commitment reflected in the practice of adult baptism. It broke away from the centralized, hierarchical

tradition of other sects and is centered in the local congregation, each local congregation being freestanding. The Baptists represent the largest (and most “evangelical”) form of Protestantism worldwide; most Baptists reject any form of creed or hierarchy and put tremendous emphasis on liberty. There are literally thousands of other versions of Protestantism, including Holiness and Pentecostal traditions, and a spectrum of local or national amalgamations of the dominant traditions.

The biggest scandal to non-Christians in this constant proliferation of Christian denominations is the intense rivalry and hostility that has so often existed among them, deriving from each one’s claim to be the exclusive representative of authentic Christianity (see final lecture). ■

Suggested Reading

J. L. McKenzie, *The Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

M. E. Marty, *Protestantism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

A. Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, translated by L.W. Kesich (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

Questions to Consider

1. Comment on this proposition: “The differences among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians are less doctrinal and moral than they are cultural.”
2. How does each family in Christianity make a claim to represent “the origins” and “the essence” of the Christian religion?

Christianity and Politics

Lecture 10

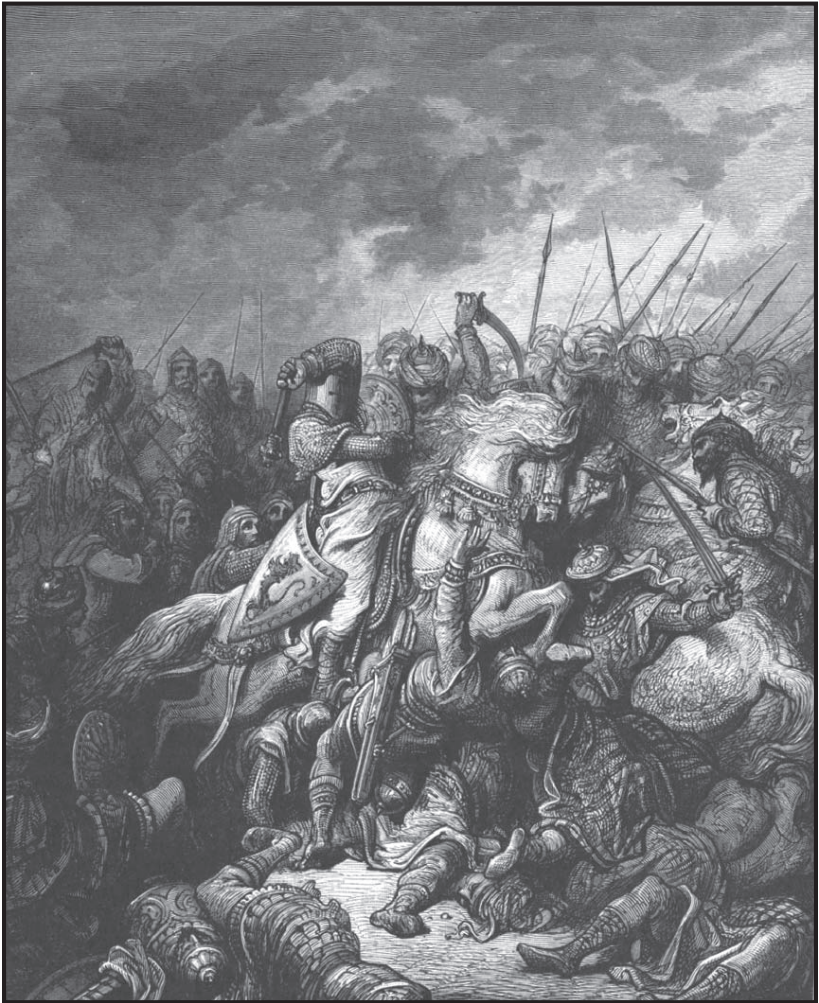
For much of its existence, [Christianity] has been deeply involved in politics and in culture.

One reason that Christianity is so seldom appreciated in strictly religious terms is that, for much of its existence, it has been deeply involved in politics and culture. This is one of Christianity's many paradoxes, because it began life as a sect of Judaism that met resistance and persecution. Jesus was executed by Roman authority as a messianic pretender. Paul and other first-generation leaders were repeatedly imprisoned. The tradition of martyrdom and of apologetic literature through Christianity's first centuries testify to its political powerlessness.

Christianity's initial focus—found in the New Testament—was on the shaping of an intentional community. It was ill-equipped to become the imperial religion. In this respect, Christianity is distinct both from Judaism and Islam, whose systems of law had the shaping of a society in view from the beginning. Remember the complexity of Christian moral teaching in the New Testament, and think of using the New Testament to guide the religious life of a civilization.

In 313, the Emperor Constantine converted and established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire; the “Constantinian era” has affected Christianity up to the present. The motivations of the emperor were undoubtedly complex and, at least in part, involved the recognition that Christianity had grown too powerful to suppress; as Tertullian had declared, “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Constantine's summoning of the Council of Nicea in 325 indicated the need to have a unified Christianity as the glue of society. Under Theodosius I, the establishment of Christianity was complete, and both Judaism and Greco-Roman religions became severely disadvantaged.

In the East, the Constantinian connection took the form of Caesaro-Papism, in which there was a close cooperation between political and ecclesiastical authorities. Such emperors as Leo and Justinian considered themselves



Credit Dore's Illustrations of the Crusades; Courtesy of Dover Pictorial Archive Series.

King Richard I (also known as Richard the Lionheart) of England led battles during the Third Crusade. His military prowess earned him his sobriquet.

theologians, as well as leaders of the state. The “New Rome” held off the “infidels” (Muslims) for centuries in the name of Christ, until the final conquest of Constantinople in 1516. In the West, the ascendancy of the pope made for a sharper distinction between political and religious authority, but the history of “Christendom” was one in which both popes and kings thought of themselves as servants of God.

The four crusades undertaken by European Christians to retake the Holy Land from Muslims represented the ideal of state/church collaboration. We should note several paradoxes of these crusades.

Christians, who in the beginning, proclaimed only a new heavenly Jerusalem and awaited the coming again of Jesus, were now involved in a real estate and trade venture, in conquering the Holy Land as a political and religious acquisition. The last and fourth crusade ended with Christian warriors sacking the city of Constantinople, which was a Christian city! Christians today who are upset by the concept of Islamic *jihad* should remember that the notion of a holy war (a crusade) is deeply ingrained in the Christian tradition.

The American, French, and Russian Revolutions each called into question the place of Christianity as a state religion.

Equally a manifestation of the Constantinian outlook is the Inquisition, a cooperative effort between the church and the state to establish uniformity. It tortured and sometimes killed heretics (and Jews), both for the sake of the church and the “Christian state”—to keep them pure.

The expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 is another example of the profound affiliation of politics and religion in medieval Europe. Even with the Reformation, the same assumed link between political and religious power continued on every side: In European countries, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whoever is prince, his is the religion”) divided a continent into Catholic and Protestant countries that entered into long-lasting religious wars. World exploration by European adventurers served the ends of ecclesiastical, as well as political, desires. A divided Christianity was transported to new

lands, as mission and colonialism merged in a competition for souls and the importation of European culture as “Christian.”

Since the 18th century, the Constantinian era has been challenged above all in the West through political revolutions. The American, French, and Russian Revolutions each called into question the place of Christianity as a state religion. In the United States, the “separation of church and state” removes the privilege of establishment without directly attacking Christianity or any other religion. In France, a more aggressive revolt against the church in the name of secular ideals (that themselves took on religious coloration) continued the old struggle over property and power. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia took its stand on the explicit repudiation of, and systematic attempt to eradicate, all religion.

Christians today struggle to come to grips with the reversal in the religion’s political fortunes. Some Christians still consider the Constantinian arrangement the ideal and seek to assert Christian political power. Others rejoice in the separation of the religion from political power and see it as a chance to recover some of the essential dimensions of the religion that its long political history tended to obscure. ■

Essential Reading

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, translation and commentary by A. Cameron and S. G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

Supplemental Reading

J. Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

T. Parker, *Christianity and the State in the Light of History* (London: A&C Black, 1955).

J. Pelikan, *The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987).

Questions to Consider

1. Did becoming the imperial religion change Christianity superficially or fundamentally?
2. How has Christianity's place in the world been altered by the intellectual and political challenges since the 17th century?

Christianity and Culture

Lecture 11

Christianity has certainly been shaped by each of these cultural engagements, but Christianity has also helped shape culture. Even Judaism and Islam look differently because of the experience of Christianity.

Another paradox of Christianity is that a religion whose origins were countercultural should find itself so entwined with culture over the course of its history. At the explicit level, the New Testament gives scant encouragement to a positive engagement with culture. The mysterious revelation in Christ is pitted against “the wisdom of the world,” that is, philosophy. Continuing the aconic tradition of Israel, the New Testament pays little attention to beauty, pleasure, or human artistry. Yet the New Testament uses rhetoric and elements of Greek philosophy; the incarnation (God is revealed through the human body) is a basis for art; and the stories of the Old Testament provide a rich cultural resource. Already in the 2nd century, Christian apologists confidently appropriated Platonic philosophy and considered Christianity to be a philosophical school. By the beginning of the 3rd century, wealthier Christians were using both biblical and pagan themes in funerary art.

When Christianity becomes the imperial religion under Constantine, it appropriates many aspects of Greco-Roman culture, even as it explicitly rejects paganism. In the realm of thought, the development of Christian doctrine owes much to philosophy. The doctrinal disputes of the 4th and 5th centuries were fundamentally ontological in character. Philosophical language even enters into the Nicene Creed (the *homoousios*). Christian writers wrote poetry and hymns in honor of Christ that made use of classical forms. Just as the hierarchy paralleled the complex administration of the empire, so did the occupation of great public spaces encourage the development of art. Public worship became a great “liturgy” with dramatic movement and elaborate costuming. Pictorial adornment of space helped identify it as sacred (see the mosaics at Ravenna). The use of icons—both private and public—is the

perfect artistic expression of belief in the incarnation and in the sanctification of humanity.

In medieval Europe, the term *Christendom* expresses the complete integration of the Christian religion and culture. In the world of learning, theology was the “Queen of the Sciences” in the university, and Scholasticism achieved a remarkable rapprochement between the gospel and Aristotle. The great medieval cathedrals that sprang up across Europe were exhibits for the Christian story in carving and in stained glass. The liturgy of the Eucharist was the cultural form of drama, and the Gregorian chant sung at the Mass and the Divine Office was both music and scriptural interpretation.

The Renaissance and the Reformation, each in its fashion, developed and diminished the Christian form of culture. The culture of the Renaissance is, on the surface, still recognizably Christian but with an even deeper recovery of Greco-Roman (and pagan) influence. In music, painting, and sculpture, Christian themes abound (see Palestrina, Michelangelo, Leonardo de Vinci). At the same time, there is a difference: Art serves the vanity of prince and pope; the ideal of the body is Greek rather than Christian; and the rebirth of Plato challenges the unified worldview of Scholasticism. Lorenzo Valla’s demonstration that the “Donation of Constantine” was a forgery stimulated the development of critical historiography.

The Reformation rejected the extravagance of late-medieval Catholicism in favor of a simpler and more scriptural Christianity. The reformers returned to an aconic approach to the visual arts. Note the use of the cross in Protestant churches rather than the Crucifix. Yet see also the marvelous carvings, etchings, and paintings of the



Cord Stock Photo Library.

Renaissance art is still Christian on the surface, but at a deeper level it represents the recovery of Greco-Roman influences, as seen in Michelangelo’s *David*.

Reformation. The Reformation sponsored an expansion of Christian music through the writing of hymns and the composition of glorious music based on those hymns and the Gospels (see Bach, *The Passions of Matthew and John*). Yet the emphasis on austerity and simplicity in worship (see particularly the Puritans) inadvertently encouraged the development of drama on a secular basis (see Shakespeare's non-biblical world).

The Enlightenment in Europe began a process of secularization of Western culture that continues today.

The Enlightenment in Europe began a process of secularization of Western culture that continues today.

Philosophy is completely removed from Christian premises and is often explicitly hostile to them (see Nietzsche). Art and music make use of Christian themes primarily through critique or parody (see Dali and Maplethorpe and Bernstein's *Mass*). Architecture expresses, not the communitarian ideal of Christianity, but the competitive aspirations of capitalism. As with its political dethronement, Christianity's cultural marginalization has stimulated conflicting responses among contemporary Christians. ■

Essential Reading

H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

Supplemental Reading

P. Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

J. Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New York: Perennial Library, 1987).

L. Sweeney, *Christian Philosophy: Greek, Medieval, Contemporary Reflections* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

Questions to Consider

1. How does the history of art and architecture reflect the stages of Christianity's religious development and change?
2. What manifestations of Christianity illustrate the cultural stance of "Christ against the world"?

Tensions and Possibilities

Lecture 12

The future of Christianity may not lie in this First World. The future of Christianity may lie in what we now call the “Third World,” or the developing nations.

Christianity has a long and complex story that is not yet over. Indeed, it may be entering into its fourth and most critical phase of development as a truly world religion. The first stage, of approximately 250 years, was that of birth and development, when Christianity was truly an intentional religious community forced to negotiate its identity in a pluralistic world without the support of culture or the state. The second stage was the long period (some 13 centuries) when Christianity was an established religion and the main form of culture in the West. The third stage, of about 2 centuries, consists in the struggle caused by cultural marginalization and political disestablishment. At the start of the 21st century, the Christian story is far from over. Indeed, Christians find themselves at a dramatic turning point of self-definition as they seek to discover which of the stages of its story best prepares it for the future.

In the First-World countries most shaped by the cultural forces of modernity, Christians are in some ways deeply divided and in some ways more united than at any time since the Reformation. Division is due less to disagreements on major points of doctrine concerning God or Christ, or even major moral stances, than to profoundly different stances toward modernity itself, especially on such issues as the authority of Scripture. The active-resistant response seeks to oppose modernity in the name of a distinctively Christian culture. Roman Catholicism and Evangelical Protestantism represent this stance. The passive-resistant stance refuses to acknowledge modernity and cultivates continuity with the past. This is the style of the Orthodox churches. The passive-accommodating stance seeks a positive engagement with modernity while maintaining loyalty to the heart of the Christian ethos. Mainline Protestant denominations tend to follow this path. The active-accommodating response is found in some liberal Protestant groups. Here, modernity sets the standard and Christianity seeks to conform itself

to the dominant culture. Reading the Scriptures is something of a salvage operation—trying to determine which parts of the Scriptures should be dropped and which parts should still be considered. This approach has, paradoxically, been identified with certain Anglican bishops, with the Jesus Seminar, and much historical research on Jesus. Here, Christianity has to reinvent itself on the basis of the empirically revived Jesus.

Christians also made significant steps toward bridging traditional hostilities during the 20th century, moving from active rivalry toward fraternal acceptance in an ecumenical movement. Protestant denominations began cooperative social ventures and explored shared dimensions of faith and morality through the World Council of Churches. Conversation and cooperation replaced competition. Roman Catholicism joined the ecumenical movement through the Second Vatican Council (1963–1965), and Orthodoxy has also joined the conversation. The ideal of unity is sought less through a structural uniformity than through the recognition of a legitimate diversity in Christian life.

The future for Christianity, however, may lie less in the First World than in developing nations. The greatest numerical growth of Christianity has been found in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as in the countries of Eastern Europe, where communism had forbidden religious practice; new Christians there are fervent. Correspondingly, Christians in Western Europe and North America decline in numbers and in enthusiasm. More pertinent for the future, Christianity outside of Europe and North America is creative, shedding the vestiges of colonialism and developing indigenous forms of Christian expression in liturgy and spirituality.

As it enters the fourth stage of its story, Christianity must decide how to move into the future, even as it recognizes that the decision is not entirely its own. Considered from the outside as a human institution, Christianity faces the challenge of deciding which aspects of its tradition are essential and which are optional. Considered from the inside as a believing community, Christianity must discern how God is at work in the world and shape its response accordingly. The future of this world religion appears to lie in its capacity to become a world religion. ■

Supplemental Reading

J. L. Fredericks, *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999).

M. Kinnamon and B. E. Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

H. Kung and H. Moltmann, eds., *Christianity and World Religions* (Concilium; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986).

G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

Questions to Consider

1. What do the recent tendencies toward unification and the tendencies toward separation reveal about the contemporary challenge to Christianity as a world religion?
2. In light of its history to this point, how realistic is it to speak of Christianity as entering, not the end of its story, but a new and positive stage in its story?

Timeline

c. 29–32	Ministry and Crucifixion of Jesus.
34–64/68	Paul's ministry and correspondence.
64	Persecution under Nero.
68–100	New Testament written.
70	Destruction of Temple in Jerusalem.
96	Persecution under Domitian.
115	Martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch.
135–155	Marcion and Valentinus flourish.
150–215	Clement of Alexandria flourishes.
165	Martyrdom of apologist Justin.
160–225	Irenaeus and Tertullian flourish.
184–254	Life of Origen of Alexandria.
251–336	Antony of Egypt.
260–340	Life of the historian Eusebius of Caesarea.
303	Great Persecution under Diocletian.
313	Constantine issues Edict of Milan.
325	Ecumenical Council at Nicea.

347–407.....	Life of John Chrysostom, great preacher and theologian in Orthodox tradition.
354–430.....	Life of Augustine of Hippo.
381.....	Council of Constantinople under Theodosius I; theological dominance of Cappadocians (Gregory, Basil, Gregory).
451.....	Council at Chalcedon: two natures in Christ.
c. 525.....	Benedict of Nursia founds monastery at Monte Cassino, writes <i>Rule for Monks</i> .
532–537.....	Great church of <i>Hagia Sophia</i> constructed in Constantinople.
590–604.....	Rule of powerful pope, Gregory I.
596.....	Mission to England.
673–735.....	Life of Venerable Bede, historian and interpreter of Scripture.
723.....	Mission to Germanic peoples.
726.....	Iconoclast controversy.
742–814.....	Charlemagne, “Holy Roman Emperor.”
863–885.....	Cyril and Methodius, mission to Slavic peoples.
910.....	Monastery founded at Cluny, source of reform.

1054.....	Schism between Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) church.
1095–1099.....	First crusade.
1100–1160.....	Peter Lombard, beginnings of Scholasticism.
1170–1221.....	Saint Dominic, founder of “Order of Preachers” (Dominicans).
1182–1226.....	Francis of Assisi, founder of mendicants.
1202–1204.....	Fourth crusade; sacking of Constantinople.
1225–1274.....	Thomas Aquinas, great Scholastic theologian.
1265–1321.....	Life of Dante, author of <i>Divine Comedy</i> .
1330–1384.....	John Wycliffe, English reformer and translator of the Bible.
1330–1400.....	English mystics flourish (Julian, Rolle, Hilton).
1340–1400.....	Geoffrey Chaucer, author of <i>Canterbury Tales</i> .
1370–1400.....	Czech reformer John Hus.
1453.....	Constantinople falls to Turkish Muslims; age of exploration begins.

1483–1546.....	Martin Luther, German reformer.
1484–1531.....	Ulrich Zwingli, Swiss reformer.
1489–1556.....	Thomas Cranmer, key figure in establishing the Church of England, leading author of <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> (1549).
1495–1498.....	Leonardo da Vinci paints <i>Last Supper</i> .
1504.....	Michelangelo's <i>David</i> completed.
1509–1564.....	John Calvin, French reformer.
1513–1572.....	John Knox, Scottish reformer.
1517.....	Luther's Ninety-five Theses.
1534.....	Divorce of Henry VIII, beginning of the Church of England.
1540.....	Jesuits founded by Ignatius of Loyola to defend faith and the pope.
1542–1621.....	Robert Bellarmine, Catholic reformer.
1545–1563.....	The Council of Trent.
1564–1616.....	Shakespeare.
1564–1642.....	Galileo.
1582.....	Congregationalist churches in England.

- 1596–1650..... Rene Descartes, French philosopher who, with the British philosophers Locke and Hume, anticipate the Enlightenment and deism.
- 1612..... Baptist churches in England.
- 1624–1691..... George Fox, founder of Quakers.
- 1685–1750..... Johann Sebastian Bach.
- 1694–1788..... Voltaire.
- 1703–1758..... American theologian Jonathan Edwards.
- 1703–1791..... John Wesley, with his brother Charles, founder of the Methodists in England and America.
- 1726–1750..... The Great Awakening in America.
- 1756–1791..... Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
- 1774..... Shakers founded in America under Mother Ann Lee.
- 1776..... American Declaration of Independence.
- 1782–1849..... William Miller and Adventist movement.
- 1788–1866..... Alexander Campbell, founder of Disciples of Christ.
- 1789..... French Revolution.

- 1869–1870..... First Vatican Council (papal infallibility).
- 1948..... World Council of Churches founded in Amsterdam.
- 1962–1965..... Second Vatican Council.

Glossary/Biographical Notes

Apocrypha: From the Greek for “hidden things,” the term refers to books not included in the canon of Scripture.

Apologist: One who makes a reasoned defense of the Christian faith, often in the face of attack; from the Greek, “make a defense.”

Apostle: Literally, “one sent on a commission” to represent another as an agent. In early Christianity, leaders who were either chosen by Jesus or were witnesses of the Resurrection.

Asceticism: A way of life characterized by discipline and the avoidance of the pleasures of the body. In Christianity, often connected with a dualistic view of the world.

Augustine (354–430): Bishop of Hippo in North Africa and one of the most influential of Latin theologians.

Baptism: Literally a “dipping,” the ritual of initiation already practiced by John the Baptist and everywhere attested among Christians from the start. It is universally recognized as a sacrament, though traditions differ as to timing (infant/adult) and the need to be “rebaptized in the spirit.”

Barth, Karl (1886–1968): Important Protestant theologian whose “neo-Orthodoxy” provided a powerful antidote to liberal tendencies in Protestantism.

Benedict of Nursia (480–550): The writer of the *Rule for Monks* and the real founder of monasticism as it thrived in the West.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153): The abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Clairvaux and a powerful preacher and mystic.

Bishop: The Greek term *episcopos* means an “overseer” or “superintendent.” In Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy (and Anglo-Catholic versions of Protestantism), the head of a diocese who can ordain other ministers (priests).

Book of Common Prayer: The literary masterpiece of Thomas Cranmer, this is the official liturgical book of the Anglican (Episcopalian) tradition.

Byzantium: The name often given to the city of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), the “New Rome” that Constantine founded; thus, the “Byzantine Empire.”

Canon: The Greek term means “rule” or “measure.” The official list of books included in the Christian Scripture, Old and New Testaments. The specific number of books included differs in Catholic and Protestant traditions.

Celibacy: The state of being unmarried. In Roman Catholicism, a requirement for male clergy at every level. In Orthodoxy, required of bishops but not of all priests.

Charismatic: Often used synonymously with *Pentecostal*, referring to the spiritual gifts that believers are given by the Holy Spirit, including the ability to prophesy and speak in tongues.

Christology: The understanding of the person and work of Jesus the Messiah = Christ. The differences in this doctrine caused major conflicts in Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries.

Communion of Saints: The conviction that all the faithful, both the living and the dead, are joined in a fellowship, whether at the Eucharist or through other spiritual bonds.

Constantine (d. 337): The first Christian emperor, whose conversion and edict of toleration (the Edict of Milan in 313) reversed the political and cultural fortunes of Christianity.

Constantinople: The “New Rome” founded by Constantine and the religious and political rival of Rome from the 4th century forward.

Council of Trent: The Roman Catholic response to the Reformation in a series of reforming meetings between 1545–1563. Decisively shaped the Catholic church for the next 400 years.

Covenant: A binding agreement between two parties; in the Bible, between God and humans. Also, *Testament*. Christians understand Jesus to have initiated a “New Covenant,” and the Christian writings form the “New Testament.”

Cranmer, Thomas (1489–1556): Much more than Henry VIII, the guiding force of the reformation of the church in England. The main author of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Creed: From the Latin *credo*, “I believe,” a formal statement of belief. Christians recite either the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed in their worship.

Crusades: Between the 11th and 13th centuries, a series of military expeditions sponsored by popes and Christian kings in an effort to wrest control of the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Deacon: From the Greek for “servant/minister,” an order of ministry lower than that of the priest and characterized by service of helping, especially in liturgy.

Denomination: A specific church group that is united in its belief, morals, and most particularly, its polity and style of worship. Protestantism is made up of many denominations, such as Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

Diocese: The territory and population governed by a bishop in the traditions that have an episcopacy. An *archdiocese* is either a particularly important diocese or one that governs others; in the same fashion, *archbishop*.

Divine Office (also, *work of God*): The round of prayer through the day, based on the recitation of the Psalms, observed by monks.

Doctrine: Literally, a “teaching.” In Christianity, the formal teaching on matters of faith is sometimes referred to as *dogma*.

Dualism: An explanation of the world in terms of equal and opposing principles. Marcion was dualistic, because he pitted evil matter against good spirit.

Easter: In the liturgical year, the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, three days after Good Friday, the day on which he was crucified.

Ecumenical Council: An official meeting of bishops from throughout the world. The first seven councils are generally regarded as ecumenical and authoritative. The Second Vatican Council was also an ecumenical council to which Protestants and Orthodox leaders sent “observers.”

Ecumenism: The term used for the movement toward Christian unity in the 20th century; also *ecumenical movement*.

Edict of Milan: The declaration of tolerance enacted by Constantine in 313 that gave Christians freedom to practice their faith.

Elder: The same Greek term *presbyteros* is rendered as “priest” by Roman Catholics and “elder” by Protestants. In Protestant denominations, the elder is a leader who may or may not also minister sacramentally.

Enlightenment: The term used to designate the intellectual movement in the 17th and, especially, 18th centuries in Europe (and, to some extent, America) that elevated human reason to a position of superiority to revelation. One of the fundamental elements of “modernity.”

Episcopal: The form of church governance in which authority flows from the top (the bishop) down to the people (laity), often through the agency of the clergy (priests).

Erasmus, Desiderius (1469–1536): The great Dutch humanist and translator of the New Testament who had a great influence on reformers, even though he remained faithful to Rome.

Eschatology: From the Greek for “last things,” the understanding of what happens at the end of time or at the end of an individual’s life. All Christians have an eschatology, but they differ greatly in their understandings of it.

Eucharist: The Greek term means “thanksgiving,” and it was used in early Christianity for prayer, then became restricted to the sharing of the meal at which the death and resurrection of Jesus is commemorated; see also **Mass** and **Liturgy**. The sacrament of the Eucharist, together with baptism, is recognized by all Christians, though they differ in the significance of the symbolism.

Eusebius of Caesarea (260–340): The first real historian of Christianity and the enthusiastic biographer of Constantine the Great.

Faith: A complex term in Christianity. It includes “belief” but also means a commitment of the mind and heart to God and to Christ; therefore, “obedience of faith.” Sometimes it refers to a “theological virtue” (together with hope and love), which is a disposition that is supposed to mark Christians in their lives.

Filioque: The Latin means “and the Son.” It was added to the Nicene Creed by Carolingian theologians and caused considerable trouble with Eastern Christians; one of the factors leading to the great schism of the 11th century between East and West.

Franciscans: The order of mendicants begun by Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), who challenged the church to reform through the observance of evangelical poverty.

Gentiles: In ancient Mediterranean culture, all those who were not Jews. The Gentiles quickly became the dominant part of the Christian membership, and after the 2nd century, we hear practically nothing of Jewish Christians.

Glossolalia: The Greek term means “speaking in tongues,” which Paul identifies as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and which charismatic or Pentecostal Christians see as a sign of being rebaptized by the Holy Spirit. Although some consider tongues real speech (“foreign languages”), it is a form of ecstatic babbling.

Gnosticism: The Gnostics were “in the know” (the Greek term suggests knowledge). A major, if diffuse, movement in the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Christianity, tending to expand the ideas of revelation and privilege to an individualistic understanding of the religion. Though opposed vigorously by Orthodox teachers, it has reappeared in various forms of “spiritual” Christianity, such as Albigensianism.

Gospel: The Greek word *euangelion* means “good news,” and the first sense of this term is the basic message of what God accomplished in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then, it came to mean the narrative accounts of Jesus’s ministry, thus, “the Gospel of Mark.”

Grace: The Greek word *charis* means “favor” or “gift,” and Christians understand everything that has happened to them through Christ to be grace—something they do not deserve and can never earn.

Hellenism: In the broadest sense, the Greek culture of the time of earliest Christianity, which was taken over by the Roman Empire and was the context within which Christianity developed in its first five centuries.

Heresy: The Greek term *hairesis* means a “party” or “opinion.” In Christianity, it has come to be understood as a misunderstanding or distorted understanding of doctrine. Thus, *heresy* is opposite *orthodoxy*, but it depends on who is talking!

Hermit: An individual who lives in solitude for the sake of complete devotion to prayer and worship. The form of monasticism begun by Antony in Egypt. In the Middle Ages, male and female hermits were sometimes called anchorites.

Holy Spirit: The power from God that was experienced through the Resurrection of Jesus and later defined as the “third person” of the Christian trinity.

Icon: From the Greek “image,” a pictorial representation of God; the saints’ devotion to icons plays a key role in Orthodox spirituality.

Iconoclasm: The term means the “breaking of images.” In Orthodoxy, resistance to the iconoclastic movement between the 4th and 9th centuries was defining of the tradition, elevating the devotion of icons (images). Among Puritan Protestants also, images were regarded as idolatrous.

Iconostasis: In Orthodox churches, the screen, adorned with icons, that sets off the sanctuary from the rest of the church.

Ignatius of Antioch (d. 115): A bishop of the church in Antioch who, on his way to martyrdom, wrote seven letters to churches in Asia and Rome.

Incarnation: The doctrine that the second person of the trinity, the Son, became fully human, so that Jesus is both human and divine.

Inerrant: “Without error.” A conviction that some Christians hold with regard to Scripture (Fundamentalists) and others, with regard to the church.

Infallible: Much like inerrant but used particularly in Roman Catholicism for papal authority in certain circumstances.

Inquisition: The ecclesial organization that was established in the 13th century for the prosecution of heresies (including Judaism); a symbol of intolerance and sometimes violence.

Inspiration: The conviction that God’s Holy Spirit can find expression, that is “word,” through human agents (the prophets) or writings (the Bible).

John the Baptist: According to the Gospel of Luke, the cousin of Jesus. According to the other Gospels (and the Jewish historian Josephus), a powerful preacher of repentance before Jesus.

Justification (also *righteousness*): The state or condition of being in right relationship with God.

Justin Martyr (d. 165): A Christian apologist who opposed the heretic Marcion and suffered martyrdom.

Liturgy: From the Greek for “public work,” the official worship of the church, especially the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, or Mass, but including as well the Divine Office.

Martyr: From the Greek word for “witness,” someone who endures death for the sake of a conviction. In Christianity, one who dies because of witnessing to Christ.

Mary: The mother of Jesus. According to the Gospels, a virgin girl of Galilee who gave birth to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. In both Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, the most revered figure next to Jesus himself: “Queen of the Saints.”

Mass: The name traditionally used in Roman Catholicism (its derivation is uncertain) for the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper.

Mendicants (also *friars*): Members of the itinerant religious orders forbidden to have personal property, above all, the Franciscans and offshoots.

Messiah: In Hebrew, “the anointed one” and, in Greek, “Christ.” The Jewish expectation for a figure to restore the people.

Millennialism (also *millenarian*): The expectation that God will visibly triumph in the future on earth in a thousand-year reign of the saints.

Mysticism: In every religion, the effort or process aimed at a direct experience of or union with the divine, especially through prayer and meditation.

New Testament: The 27 compositions in Greek that constitute the Christian portion of the Bible.

Nicene Creed: The statement of faith devised by the Orthodox bishops in response to Arius at the Council of Nicea in 325; later expanded by the Council of Constantinople in 381.

Old Testament: The compositions of the Hebrew Bible (read by the first Christians in the Greek translation called the Septuagint) to which the writings of the New Testament were appended to form the Christian Bible.

Origen (184–254): The greatest Scripture scholar and theologian of early Christianity, whose reputation was hurt by the excesses of some enthusiastic followers.

Original Sin: The conviction that the Fall by Adam and Eve fundamentally shaped the human experience until redemption through Christ.

Orthodoxy (see **Heresy**): The Greek term means “right teaching” or “right opinion.” The opposite of heresy. Also applied to the Orthodox tradition in distinction to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

Paul the Apostle (d. 64 or 68): Originally a persecutor of the infant Christian movement, he became its most famous first-generation exponent, associated especially with the conversion of Gentiles and the writing of letters that became part of the New Testament. A highly controversial figure; see the Teaching Company course *Paul the Apostle*.

Penance: In general, “doing penance” means repenting of sins, or accepting the just punishment for sin. The term was used in Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism for the sacrament that is now usually called the “Sacrament of Reconciliation.”

Pentecost: The Jewish feast 50 days after Easter, which according to the Acts of the Apostles, was when the Holy Spirit came on Jesus's followers, "giving birth" to the church. An important feast of the liturgical year.

Pentecostal (also *charismatic*): A Christian for whom the visible manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—especially speaking in tongues—is the distinguishing mark of authentic Christianity.

Persecutions: The series of efforts—some local, some systemic—to eliminate the Christian movement through force. The first by the Roman state was under Nero in 64, and the greatest was under Diocletian in 303.

Peter (d. 64): The follower of Jesus who became, with Paul, an apostle and martyr. Two letters are attributed to him in the New Testament, and by legend, he was the first bishop of Rome.

Pilgrimage: The practice of traveling (often in groups) to a place considered holy to gain benefit from the power present through the influence of the saint or martyr commemorated at that location.

Pontius Pilate: Roman procurator in Judea under whom Jesus was executed.

Pope (also the *papacy*): From the 4th century on, this title was used for the Bishop of Rome.

Priest (see also **Elder**): Derived from the Greek *presbyteros*, a rank of ministry in the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglo-Catholic traditions, below that of the bishop. Can celebrate all the sacraments but not ordain other ministers.

Purgatory: In Roman Catholicism, a place of purgation in which, after death, the soul may be cleansed of venial sins in order to be fit to enter into the divine presence (heaven).

Reformation: The general name given to the efforts to reform the church in the 16th century. Usually used with reference to the Protestant Reformation (Luther, Calvin, and others) but can also be used of Roman Catholic efforts that are sometimes designated as the *Counter-Reformation* (as in the Council of Trent).

Relics: Literally, “remains”; usually the material remains of a martyr or saint that are venerated and thought to have power.

Renaissance: Literally, “rebirth”; the intellectual and cultural movements in Europe from the 14th to the 16th centuries that ended the medieval period and provided a transition to the modern era.

Resurrection: Rising from the dead; in the first place, that of Jesus and, in the second, the expectation for all those who die “in Christ” to share God’s life.

Sacrament: In the broad sense, an outward sign that effects what it symbolizes. Christians recognize different numbers of rituals as sacraments, from two (baptism and Eucharist) to seven (baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, holy orders, marriage, reconciliation, anointing of the sick—or extreme unction).

Sanctification: Becoming holy; the process of transformation into the image of Christ. The goal of Christian existence is to become a “saint.”

Sanctuary: In the Christian church, that part of the building that is regarded as particularly sacred, because of the presence of the Eucharist, the altar, or the pulpit or because it is the place where worship happens.

Scholasticism: The term used for the educational system of the medieval schools, especially for the methods of argumentation and debate found in the great universities, such as that of Paris. From the 11th century, Scholastic philosophy and theology forged a synthesis of Christianity and Greek philosophy (especially Aristotle).

Sin: In Christianity, more than an error or failure, a deliberate act of disobedience to God's will.

Synoptics: The collective term used for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are sufficiently similar to be arranged in three parallel columns (thus, "seen together") and, undoubtedly, are literarily interdependent. Most scholars think Mark was written first and was used by Matthew and Luke.

Torah: Jewish designation for the first five books of the Bible but also for the entire tradition of lore and learning derived from the Bible as a whole.

Trinity: The Christian understanding of God is that there is only one God—that is, the ultimate power who creates all from nothing—and that this one God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This understanding of the inner nature of God is derived from the specifically Christian experience of God in Jesus Christ (the Son) and through the Holy Spirit.

Uniat: The term used to refer to church bodies that are Orthodox in theology and ritual yet are in union with Rome.

Vatican: The section of Rome that is the residence of the pope and the central administration of the Roman Catholic church.

Bibliography

Essential Readings:

Writings from the New Testament can be read in any modern translation, such as the Revised Standard Edition; see *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: Revised Standard Edition*, edited by H. G. May and B. M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). Guidance through the biblical literature is given by *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, edited by L. E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998). A sense of changing biblical interpretation is gained from *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1: *From Beginnings to Jerome*, edited by P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge University Press, 1970); vol. 2: *From the Fathers to the Reformation*, edited by G. W. H. Lampe (Cambridge University Press, 1969); and vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, edited by S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge University Press, 1963).

For other Christian literature in addition to the works listed separately, see *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (8 volumes), edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (reprint of 1885 edition; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (first series, 14 volumes), edited by P. Schaff (reprint of 1886 edition; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (second series, 14 volumes), edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace (reprint of 1890 edition; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); and *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (104 volumes), edited by R. J. Payne et al. (New York: Paulist Press, 1978–2002). For excerpts, see C. L. Manschreck (ed.), *A History of Christianity: Readings in the History of the Church from the Reformation to the Present* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

The best single-volume reference work is the superb *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F. L. Cross, 3rd edition by E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Other useful references include: J. D. Douglas (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 1978); J. C.

Brauer, *The Westminster Dictionary of Church History* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1971); F. X. Weiser, *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1952); and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, 14 volumes (New York: Thomson, Gale, 2002).

Students who wish to get a start can do no better than with the first Essential Reading listed for the first lecture, M. J. Weaver, *Introduction to Christianity*, 3rd edition, with D. Brakke and J. Bivins (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1998).

Supplementary Readings:

Abbott, W. M., S.J. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: Guild Press, 1966. An English translation of the documents of the council that brought Roman Catholicism into conversation with the modern world, together with commentary by participants.

Ahlstrom, S. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972. Highly readable (it won the 1973 National Book Award), this study by the dean of American religious historians is also comprehensive.

Anderson, W. K. *Protestantism: A Symposium*. Nashville, TN: Commission on Courses of Study, Methodist Church, 1944. This set of essays provides viewpoints on a variety of topics, from the early reformers, to basic Protestant principles, to church music.

Aumann, J. (with others). *Monasticism: A Historical Overview*. Still River, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1984. A small but illuminating set of essays by monastic authors on the monastic tradition from its origins to the present day.

Bainton, R. H. *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. Boston. Beacon Press, 1952. A classic treatment of the pivotal events and persons that decisively changed Christianity in Europe.

Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. Trans. By L. Doyle. This 6th-century composition drew from the best of the earlier movements to create a stable form of monasticism—combining “prayer and work” in the frame of a “school of the Lord’s service”—that would prove widely influential.

Benz, E. *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1963. An introduction to the Orthodox tradition that pays particular attention to its distinctive theological tendencies.

Binding, G. *High Gothic: The Age of the Great Cathedrals*. London: Taschen, 1999. With color illustrations, a treatment of the major cathedrals in European countries.

Binns, J. *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. This recent introduction surveys the variety of manifestations of the Orthodox tradition throughout the world.

Bloesch, D. *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission*. Christian Foundations; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. From the evangelical Protestant perspective, a statement of basic convictions concerning the several dimensions of the church.

Boff, Leonardo, and Boff, Clodovis. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987. Written by practitioners, this volume provides entry to the distinctive theological perspective originating in Europe but finding its most powerful expression in Latin America.

Brown, P. *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwells, 1996. A leading historian takes a fresh look at the remarkable development that was Christendom.

Brown, R. M. *The Ecumenical Revolution: An Interpretation of the Catholic-Protestant Dialogue*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1967. In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, an assessment of the achievements and possibilities for Christian unity.

Bynum, C. W. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food for Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. A leading feminist historian uncovers the complexities of women's experience in medieval Christianity.

———. *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. A thorough and inventive study of the surprising ways in which gender mattered and didn't matter in spiritual writings of medieval Christianity.

Carrington, P. *The Early Christian Church*. Vol. 2: *The Second Christian Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957. This solidly researched and careful survey shows the developments and tensions in Christianity in its critical second century of existence.

Carroll, J. *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Although excessive in some respects, this passionate account touches on the major issues concerning the long and tragic story of anti-Semitism in the Catholic tradition.

Chadwick, O. *The Reformation*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964. Like the others in this series of Penguin histories, a reliable and readable survey of this period of Christian history in Europe, written by a notable historian.

Dillenberger, J., and Welch, C. *Protestant Christianity Interpreted through Its Development*. 2nd edition. New York: Macmillan, 1988. As its title suggests, this study seeks to define the multifaceted Protestant tradition in terms of historical changes and adaptations.

Dix, G. *The Shape of the Liturgy*. 2nd edition. New York: Seabury Press, 1982. This is the classic historical study of how Christian worship, above all in the Eucharist, developed from simple origins into its current configurations.

Dolan, J. P. *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1985. A substantial study

of the distinctive way in which the Roman Catholic tradition developed from an immigrant to a truly American church.

Ellis, J. T. *American Catholicism*. Revised edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. Written earlier than Dolan (see above) by the dean of American Roman Catholic historians, a standard treatment of the American version of Catholicism.

Eusebius of Caesarea. *Life of Constantine*. Translation and commentary by A. Cameron and S. G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. The biography by the 4th-century Christian historian that portrays the emperor as a hero of the faith, a symbolic expression of “Constantinianism.”

Ferm, D. W. *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986. This book provides the names and works by the many theologians who have sought to align Christianity more with the poor than the powerful.

Forrell, G. W. (ed.). *Christian Social Teachings: A Reader in Christian Social Ethics from the Bible to the Present*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1966. A useful compendium of primary source materials illustrating the spectrum of positions taken by Christians on social issues.

Fox, R. L. *Pagans and Christians*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1986. A popular but responsible account of Christianity’s steady progression into Greco-Roman culture between 30 and 600 A.D.

Frederick J. L. *Faith among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions*. New York: Paulist Press, 1999. A positive treatment of the way Christian theologians are seeking to respond to the implications of the experience of global pluralism for Christian self-understanding.

Frend, W. H. C. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*. A careful and influential study of the hard circumstances in which Christianity made its way in the world over the first three centuries.

Gilson, E. *The History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1955. Written by a fine historian who was also deeply appreciative of Scholastic philosophy, this survey discusses the main figures and variations in that powerful medieval synthesis of Christianity and Aristotle.

Grant, R. M., and Tracy, D. *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. 2nd revised and enlarged edition. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984. An accessible introduction to the major moments in the complex history of biblical interpretation within Christianity.

Haddad, Y. Y., and Esposito, J. L. *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. A collection of essays that surveys the efforts of feminist theologians to rethink patriarchal traditions within the three world religions of the West.

Hamilton, M. P. (ed.). *The Charismatic Movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975. A collection of essays concentrating on the ecumenical phenomenon of Pentecostalism during the 1960s and 1970s.

Hays, R. B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996. A constructive effort to make the New Testament pertinent to contemporary ethics, notable for its close reading of the New Testament and its engagement with contemporary Christian ethicists.

Hollenweger, W. J. *The Pentecostals*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1972. A study of those Christians for whom the manifest gifts of the Holy Spirit—especially speaking in tongues—is of first importance.

Johnson, L. T. *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. A study of earliest Christianity that emphasizes its specifically religious dimension. See also the Teaching Company course *Earliest Christianity: Experience of the Divine*.

———. *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters*. New York: Doubleday, 2003. An effort to show that the 4th- century Nicene Creed provides a contemporary guide to Scripture, as well as Christian practices.

———. *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*. 2nd revised edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. This introduction deals with the anthropological, historical, literary, and religious dimensions of the classic Christian texts.

Johnson, P. *A History of Christianity*. New York: Athenaeum, 1976. A sometimes idiosyncratic but lively and informed popular history, with an unusual selection of heroes and villains.

Jungmann, J. A. *The Mass: An Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Survey*. Translated by E. Fernandez, edited by M. E. Evans. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975. The central liturgy of the Roman Catholic tradition, surveyed by a leading historian of the Eucharist.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Creeds*. London: Longmans, 1960. A companion to his *Early Christian Doctrines*, this book traces, with Kelly's usual finesse and learning, the development of statements of belief in earliest Christianity.

———. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Revised edition. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1960. A straightforward and well-informed explanation of how and why critical Christian teachings developed over the first four centuries.

Kinnamon, M., and Cope, B. E. *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. A helpful collection of primary texts that illustrate the movement toward Christian unity in the 20th century.

Knox, R. A. *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*. A classic study of movements within Christianity that emphasized the experience of the Holy Spirit, especially those that led to conflict and division.

Kugel, J. L., and Greer, R.A. *Early Biblical Interpretation*. Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986. A study valuable especially for showing how early Christian and Jewish interpretations of the Bible were both similar and dissimilar.

Kung, H., and Moltmann, J.(eds.). *Christianity and World Religions*. Concilium; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986. A collection of essays by Christian theologians seeking a positive relationship with other world religions, valuable because of its attention to specific world religions.

Lake, K. (ed.). *The Apostolic Fathers*. The Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915. An accessible edition in Greek and English of the basic Christian texts of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries.

Layton, B. (ed.). *The Gnostic Scriptures*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1987. A collection of the most important writings produced by the Gnostic movement, with helpful introductions and notes.

Lea, H. C. *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages: Its Organization and Operation*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963. A straightforward and informative treatment of the mechanisms for suppressing difference by the medieval church.

LeClerq, Jean. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*. 2nd revised edition, translated by C. Misrahi. New York: Fordham University Press, 1974. A classic appreciation of the distinctive combination of piety and scholarship that pervaded monasteries before the rise of the medieval university.

Leith, J. H. (ed.). *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982. Makes available in English translation, with helpful commentary, the major statements of belief produced by Christian communities.

Lietzmann, H. *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*. Translated by D. H. G. Reave, with introduction and further inquiry by R. D.

Richardson. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979. A rich resource for the sources of the Christian liturgy and a classic example of historical analysis into tradition.

Macquarrie, J. *A Guide to the Sacraments*. New York: Continuum, 1997. A simple, yet substantial introduction by a major theologian to the meaning of the sacraments within Christianity.

Marsden, G. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. An important and influential study of fundamentalism as a response to modernity.

Marty, M. E. *Protestantism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972. Like the others in this series, an accessible survey of this complex version of Christianity, written with authority and grace.

———. *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America*. New York: Dial Press, 1970. A major statement by one of the most influential church historians and public theologians in America.

McBrien, R. P. *Catholicism*. 2 vols. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980. A major statement on Roman Catholicism reflecting the tensions in that tradition 15 years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council.

McGinn, B. *The Presence of God: A History of Western Mysticism*. 3 vols. New York: Crossroad, 2000. A major study of the mystics in the Western church in their historical context.

McKenzie, J. L. *The Roman Catholic Church*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969. Written within a few years of the Second Vatican Council, an effort to describe the basic lineaments of Catholicism by an author with the gift of simplicity.

Meeks, W. A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. A deservedly influential study of earliest Christianity using the perspectives of the social sciences.

———. *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993. A study that shows the relationship between forming communities and forming moral character and the multiple ways that happened in the first two Christian centuries.

Meyendorff, J. *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*. 3rd revised edition. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981. A statement by a major figure in American Orthodoxy that is both descriptive and normative.

Murray, P. *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. A necessarily partial guide to the major works and artists in this complex and rich history.

Neill, S. *A History of Christian Missions*. 2nd revised edition by O. Chadwick. New York: Penguin, 1986. A crisp treatment of a major subject by a leading expert; revised by an equally fine scholar.

Niebuhr, H. R. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper and Row, 1951. A seminal work that proposes a typology of responses within Christianity to the larger culture; constantly corrected by others in detail, but perennially illuminating.

O'Donovan, O., and O'Donovan, J. L. *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. A valuable collection of primary texts representing the wide spectrum of views in the history of Christianity on the political order and religion's relation to it.

Parker, T. *Christianity and the State in the Light of History*. London: A&C Black, 1955. A short survey of Christianity's different postures toward the political order over its history in the West.

Pelikan, J. *The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987. A brilliant revisiting of

Gibbon, looking again at the role of Constantine and Theodosius in shaping the Christian empire.

———. *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture*. New York: Perennial Library, 1987. A groundbreaking study of the ways in which Jesus has shaped culture and, in turn, been shaped by culture.

———. *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. Pelikan does for the mother of Jesus what he did for her son; that is, shows how she figured in the culture of Christendom.

———. *The Illustrated Jesus through the Centuries*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. The companion volume to *Jesus through the Centuries* (see above), providing a rich set of pictures and icons.

Quasten, J. *Patrology*. 4 vols. Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1983. An authoritative handbook, providing full bibliographical information on all the Christian literature of the first five centuries.

Rauschenbusch, W. *A Theology of the Social Gospel*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1945. A classic exposition of the understanding of Christianity in terms of a liberal commitment to social betterment.

Runciman, S. *A History of the Crusades*. 3 vols. New York: Harper and Row, 1964. A comprehensive and detailed examination of the military expeditions launched by Christians in the West to conquer the Holy Lands controlled by Muslims.

Sandeen, E. *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. A treatment of evangelical Protestantism that emphasizes its roots in eschatology rather than in its rejection of modernity (see Marsden).

Schmemmann, A. *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. 2nd revised and expanded edition. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary

Press, 1988. A study of Orthodoxy, with particular attention to the centrality of worship and the sacraments in this tradition.

———. *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*. Translated by L. W. Kesich. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. Like the other volumes in this introductory series (see Marty and McKenzie), an attractive introduction to the tradition by one of its major spokespersons.

Senn, F. C. (ed.). *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986. A representative sample of the spiritual riches and resources within a tradition that is sometimes thought to be lacking in them.

Shaw, M. *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996. A necessarily broad view of a complex subject, this volume provides some background to the explosion of Christianity in that continent.

Smalley, B. *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964. An important study that shows how lively medieval study of the Bible was and how lively was the exchange between Jewish and Christian teachers in that era.

Southern, R. W. *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*. New York: Penguin Books, 1970. As with other books in the Penguin series, a readable introduction to a complex period in the history of Christianity by a leading scholar.

Sunquist, S. W. (ed.). *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Christianity is finding increased success among Asian populations, and this dictionary provides some helpful guidance to places, people, and phenomena.

Sweeney, L. *Christian Philosophy: Greek, Medieval, Contemporary Reflections*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. A study that examines the different forms of engagement between Christianity and philosophy at different periods.

Thompson, B. *Liturgies of the Western Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961. A useful collection of primary sources in translation of liturgies used in the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions.

Verhey, A. *Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. A major study of the ways in which Christian communities can engage the Bible in thinking about such moral issues as health, the economy, sexuality, and politics.

Vidler, A. R. *The Church in an Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present Day*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961. Another in the series of excellent Penguin histories, this one showing the impact of new political forces in Europe and the various strategies of response developed in different Christian bodies.

Wagner, W. H. *After the Apostles: Christianity in the Second Century*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994. An excellent short study that shows how Christianity faced its decisive moment of self-definition in response to powerful alternative visions.

Ware, T. *The Orthodox Church*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963. A short introduction to the tradition that puts particular emphasis on the centrality of worship.

Weaver, M. J. *Introduction to Christianity*. 3rd edition, with D. Bakke and J. Bivins. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press, 1998. A thorough yet readable introduction at the college level that is wonderfully attuned to contemporary issues without losing sight of the weight of tradition.

———. *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. An important statement of feminism in Catholicism based on sound historical research.

Williams, M. A. *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for the Dismantling of a Dubious Category*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. Despite its

daunting title, a readable and learned reexamination of our actual knowledge of this early Christian phenomenon.